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Idaho State Department of Education

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# IDAHO RECEIVES \$1.3 MILLION GRANT FOR YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION

BOISE – The Idaho State Department of Education has been awarded a \$1.29 million grant over the next three years to begin the Idaho Lives Project, a collaboration among the state, the Idaho Suicide Prevention Action Network (SPAN-Idaho) and other partner organizations to reduce the prevalence of suicide among youth ages 10-24 in Idaho.

Today, Idaho ranks among the top five states for teen suicides and in the top ten states for overall suicides. Because of Idaho's rural geography, many students and families have faced barriers in accessing prevention and mental health services.

"This is a unique opportunity for our state and local communities. The tragedy of suicide is beyond measure, and unfortunately, Idaho is not immune to this tragedy. With the right knowledge and support, suicide is the most preventable form of death," Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna said. "Through this grant, the State Department of Education as well as state and local partners will work together to equip our schools and communities with the training and resources necessary to prevent teen suicide now and in the future."

Over the next three years, the Idaho Lives Project will reach an estimated 31,000 individuals in schools and communities across Idaho, including students in elementary and middle grades, entire school communities and all sub-groups of the population. An advisory board will select a total of 30-42 school communities to participate in this project based upon need, interest and readiness to benefit.

Specifically, the project will focus on training school staff and community adults in effectively responding to at-risk youth, equipping students to reach out to trusted adults when peers exhibit suicidal tendencies, and fostering local resources to connect at-risk youth with mental health providers.

"Implementing the Idaho Lives Project with the curriculum 'Sources of Strength' is going to be a significant boost to the suicide prevention efforts for the youth in Idaho," said Jeni Griffin, Executive Director of SPAN-Idaho. "With this grant, Idaho can address youth suicide with a program proven to reduce suicide in our youth as well as giving them key tools as protective factors for them as adults. SPAN Idaho is pleased to be a part of this collaborative project."

The Idaho Lives Project will evaluate and document strategies used so effective practices can be shared across the state.

The Project is federally funded by the State and Tribal Youth Suicide Prevention Grant awarded through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to support states and tribes in developing and implementing suicide prevention strategies.

For more information about the Idaho Lives Project, please contact Matt McCarter at the Idaho State Department of Education at [mamccarter@sde.idaho](mailto:mamccarter@sde.idaho) or (208) 332-6961, or contact Jeni Griffin at SPAN-Idaho at [jgriffin@spanidaho.org](mailto:jgriffin@spanidaho.org) or (208) 860-1703.

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